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UNLAWFULNESS

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POLYGAMY

EVINCED:

OR,

OBSERVATIONS

OCCASIONED BY THE  
ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATIONS

OF THE PASSAGES OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT,

RESPECTING THE  
LAWS OF MARRIAGE,

K  
M., &c.

Lately published in a Treatise on

FEMALE RUIN.

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THE  
UNIFORMED  
POLY GAMY  
EVINCED  
OR  
CORRELATIONS



EXHIBITION  
NEW  
LAW OF MARRIAGE  
F. M. L. R. V. M.

LONDON  
Printed for C. L. B. R. S. T. 1841



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1780

**T O**  
**THE READER.**

**T**HE following Observations are offered from Motives of sincere Regard for the present and future Happiness of Mankind. They are designed to remind you of the true Meaning of the Passages of the New Testament respecting the Laws of Marriage, and to obviate the erroneous Interpretations of them lately published in the Treatise on Female Ruin. A Treatise which the Author of these Observations hath been induced to consider, not from any Apprehensions of the Influence of it upon the sincere Christian acquainted with the Sense of the sacred Writings, but from a View of the Illusion, and Encouragement that may result from it to the Uninformed, the Prejudiced, and Vicious.

Persons

Persons of this Description will ever be disposed to credit Suggestions that favour their Conduct, and would gladly intrench themselves under the Sanction and Authority of a Preacher of the Gospel, in the present Case, however averse they may be from attending to his Instructions in other Instances.

That the following Observations may conduce to the Promotion of the Purposes for which they are offered, is the Object of the sincerest Wishes of your, &c.

H. W.

LONDON,  
Oct. 3, 1780.

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THE  
UNLAWFULNESS  
OF  
POLYGYAMY  
PROVINCED.

THE Author of Thelyphthora having asserted that Polygamy 'allowed by the Law of Moses, is not prohibited by the Gospel,' and that it was impossible that our blessed Lord, who came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it, should condemn Polygamy as Adultery, we shall only consider and obviate this Writer's erroneous Interpretations of the Passages of the New Testament respecting those Points.

For if these Passages of the New Testament are found to afford no Foundation for our Author's Positions, he must appear to have been but

but erecting a Castle in the Air, and, after all the Expence of Labour he hath incurred, his mighty and elaborate Superstructure must fall to the Ground. Most certainly, nothing less than the Authority of Revelation can determine on the Points here treated; the sacred Writings are our only certain Rule of Faith and Conduct, and to no Truths should we more readily subscribe than to these asserted by those early Writers of the Church, who, notwithstanding their Errors are acknowledged, by one, who was as little partial to them as our Author, to have been 'the chief Ornaments of the Ages in which they lived;' "that we are not to attend to human Assertions, but to establish our Questions by the Scriptures, which are our most certain, *μαλλονδη μουν αποδειξις*, or rather our only Demonstration of the Truth of them; and that *Δι παν ρημα η ωραγμα πισυνσθαι τη μητορια της διακονιας γραφης*: every Assertion and Action, or every Thing that is said or done, ought to be confirmed by the Evidence of the divinely-inspired Writings."—*Clemens Alex. Strom. Basil Etbu.*

Let us proceed to the Consideration of the Passages of the New Testament erroneously interpreted



terpreted by our Author. The Author of Thelyphthora asserts that our blessed Lord's Discourses, in the Beginning of the nineteenth Chapter of St. Matthew, and of the tenth of St. Mark, as well as in other Parts of the New Testament, concerning the Laws of Marriage, relate only to Divorce, yet must we affirm that they also condemn Polygamy; and that Polygamy allowed by the Law, is therefore forbidden under the Gospel. The Truth of these Positions, must evidently appear to all who impartially review those Passages.

‘ The Pharisees came to our Lord tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a Man to put away his Wife for every Cause? And he answered, and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he who made them at the Beginning, made them Male, and Female? As though he had said, have ye not read, in the Mosaic Account of the Creation, that God, from the Beginning of it, when he certainly constituted human Nature in a Way most conducive to your Happiness, in creating your first Parents, made them Male and Female, or one Man, and one Woman, which would neither allow of Divorce or Polygamy? ‘ And said, for

this Cause shall a Man leave Father and Mother, and shall adhere to his Wife, and they two shall be one Flesh; wherefore they are no longer two, but one Flesh; what therefore God hath joined together, saith he, under the Dispensation of the Gospel, let not Man separate, or put asunder.' Let the Bond of Matrimony be esteemed such as nothing can dissolve, except what can make them cease to be one Flesh by rendering the Person of one, common to some third Person. They are not to be separated unless they have rendered themselves one Flesh with some other.

They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a Writing of Divorcement, and to dismiss or put her away? He saith unto them, Moses, because of the Hardness of your Hearts, suffered you to put away your Wives; but from the Beginning it was not so; and I, who appear to reduce this Institution to its original Perfection, say unto you, that, under the Dispensation of the Gospel, 'Whosoever shall put away his Wife, except it be for Fornication, and shall marry another, committeth Adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away, committeth Adultery.' The same Truths our Lord  
also



also asserts in the fifth of St. Matthew and sixteenth of St. Luke: in the former, explaining the Law, he saith, that 'whosoever shall put away his Wife, saving for the Cause of Fornication, causeth her to commit Adultery;' and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth Adultery; in the latter, our Lord, asserting the Law in its utmost Extent, and Spirituality, affirms, that such unjust Dismission of a Wife, and marrying another, were contrary to the original Design of Marriage and Adultery; for, 'whosoever, putteth away his Wife and marrieth another, saith he, committeth Adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her Husband, committeth Adultery.'

Upon our Lord having made such express Declaration, St. Matthew relates that his Disciples say unto him, if the Case of a Man be so with his Wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, all Men cannot receive this Saying, save they to whom it is given.

With this Relation of St. Matthew, respecting the Points before us, let us review that of St. Mark. The Pharisees, saith this Evangelist,

gelist, came to our Lord, and asked him, Is it  
 lawful for a man to put away his Wife? tempt-  
 ing him, conceiving that his Reply might ad-  
 minister some Pretence for Censure. And he  
 answered and said unto them, What did Moses  
 command you? And they said, Moses suffered  
 to write a Bill of Divorcement, and to put her  
 away. And Jesus answered, and said unto  
 them, for the Hardness of your Heart, which  
 prevented your perceiving and adhering to the  
 first Institution and original Design of Matri-  
 mony, he wrote you this Precept. But from  
 the Beginning of the Creation, God would  
 have it otherwise, for he made them Male and  
 Female. For this Cause shall a Man leave his  
 Father and Mother, and adhere to his Wife;  
 and they twain shall be one Flesh; so then they  
 are no more twain, or two, but one Flesh:  
 What, therefore, God hath thus joined to-  
 gether, let no Man, under the Dispensation of  
 the Gospel, pretend to put asunder. And,  
 when in the House, his Disciples asked him  
 again of the same Matter: And he saith to  
 them, that according to the original Design  
 of Marriage, 'Whosoever shall put away his  
 Wife, and marry another, committeth Adultery  
 against her; she, by the primitive Institution

of



of the conjugal Union being still his Wife, and having the sole Right to his Person; And if a Woman shall put away her Husband, and be married to another, she committeth Adultery.

From the preceding Passages nothing can be more evident to an impartial Reader, than that our blessed Lord was speaking of the primitive Institution of Marriage; that he would have his Disciples act according to the original Design of it; that he hath reduced the Law of Marriage to that primitive Institution which would not admit of Divorce or Polygamy; that Man and Wife are by personal Union one Flesh, and cannot be separated except for personal Intercourse with some other; that whosoever shall put away his Wife and marry another, except for Fornication, committeth Adultery against her; and if a Woman shall put away her Husband, and be married to another, she committeth Adultery, the Husband and Wife having by the original Institution of Marriage the sole Right to each other's Person: that not only the Husband hath the sole Right to the Person of his Wife, but that she also hath the sole Right to the Person of her Husband: according to St. Paul's express Commands, where he saith to  
avoid

avoid Fornication, let every Man have his own Wife, and every Woman her own Husband.—

“Let the Husband render unto the Wife due Benevolence, and likewise the Wife unto the Husband. The Wife hath not Power over her own Body, but the Husband; and likewise the Husband hath not Power over his own Body, but the Wife:” their Engagements being reciprocal, they are in Conscience obliged to continue appropriate to each other.

With respect to the Remark of the Author of Thelyphthora, upon the Difference of Expression in the original Words, *κατὰ γυναῖκα* and *τον ιδιον ανδρα*, which might be rendered, Let every Man have his own Wife, and every Woman her own proper Husband.—The Difference may as well denote such an Appropriation of the Husband to the Wife, that he have no personal Intercourse with any other Woman, as that she should not have personal Intercourse with any other Man; and nothing can be more evident than the Unlawfulness of Polygamy from these Passages of St. Paul. For, if the Husband hath not Power over his own Body, but the Wife, he, certainly, cannot transfer that Power by marrying another. We may also here add, that however the Au-  
thor



thor of Thelyphthora may conceive that Doctor Whitby's Prejudices have warred against his Judgment, in his Note upon the 10th Chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, and that he hath there found out "a *plain* Argument against Things not mentioned or even hinted at in the Text," we must beg Leave to observe, that that learned Commentator by no Means appears to have erred respecting the Intention and Meaning of our Lord in that Chapter, and that really Judgment, and not Prejudice, dictated the Comment.

That learned Writer, in the Words immediately preceding, and which are a Part of the Note that the Author of Thelyphthora hath quoted, saith, that from our Lord's Declaration, that he who putteth away his Wife and marrieth another, committeth Adultery against her, it clearly follows, 'that he who not having put her away marries another, must be guilty of the same Crime, seeing he must have the same Power to marry another when the first is put away, as when she is not put away.' And then follows the rest of the Note. What can more clearly refer to not only the Unlawfulness of Divorce, but also of Polygamy, and more evidently

denly condemn Polygamy as Adultery, than such an express Declaration, that whosoever dismisseth his Wife and marrieth another, committeth Adultery against her?—And what can be more evident from the preceding Relations of the Evangelists, and Declarations of the Apostle, than the Obligations of Husband and Wife to continue entirely appropriate to each other, and that our blessed Lord in his Reply to the Pharisees, referred to the original Design of the conjugal Union, and hath reduced the Laws of it to the primitive Institution of Matrimony?

With respect to the Beginning of the first Chapter of Deuteronomy, be it translated imperatively, or as our Author desires, hypothetically, yet, have we our Saviour's Authority to assert that, "for the Hardness of their Hearts Moses wrote them the Precept concerning Divorce, and suffered them to dismiss their Wives, but from the *Beginning* it was not so."

Moses, not as a Politician, as our Author would suggest, but as a Lawgiver, as God's Minister permitted Divorce. This was a divine Permission,



Permission, and therefore the Deity dispensed with his own Institution.

The Jews were permitted to dismiss their Wives, for some Matter of Uncleanness. This Cause of Divorce was certainly something less than Fornication, because our Lord condemns it as an unjust Cause of Dismissal, and yet permits Divorce in case of Fornication. Perhaps this Cause was neither what the Schools of Hillel nor Shammai adopted; and as our Lord allows Divorce in case of Adultery, and Adultery was punished with Death, the Cause of Divorce permitted under the Old Testament, must have been something between their Interpretations. Be it however what it may, it was permitted, and Christ only saith that under the Dispensation of the Gospel it should not obtain, but that Christians must act according to *his* Law respecting it, who hath reduced Matrimony to its primitive Institution.

With relation to the Old Testament, our Lord here hath certainly prescribed a *new* Law, which had not before obtained among the Jews. Divorces under the Old Testament were permitted for less Causes than Fornication; but

our Saviour under the Gospel will not permit them, except in that Case. The Answer of Christ to the Pharisees respecting Divorce was, as our Author allows, 'grounded on the old Marriage Institution;' and this, with relation to the Law, is certainly a *new* Dispensation.

Our Author, endeavouring to evade the Force of the twenty-eighth Verse of the fifth Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, affirms, that the Word Woman in the Original must mean such a Woman as Adultery could be committed with, supposing the Thought brought forth into Act, p. 124. Let us review this Passage. 'Whosoever looketh upon a Woman to lust after her, hath already committed Adultery with her in his Heart.' The evident Meaning of these Words is, that whosoever shall gaze on a Woman to lust after her, and instead of rejecting, indulge the secret Workings of Desire, or purpose also to gratify it, hath already committed Adultery with her in his Heart, he only having escaped for want of Opportunity to accomplish his irregular Desire. It is well known that the Word here translated 'looketh on,' means to gaze on, or fix the Eye with the utmost Attention upon: nor can any Thing be more evident than



than that the original Word that is here translated 'a Woman,' is, like נִשְׂאָה, a general Term, that distinguisheth a Woman from a Man. Yet the Author of Thelyphthora would have us think, that the Word Woman here must certainly mean a Woman who is either espoused or hath cohabited with her Husband, (p. 124); as if Adultery could be committed with no other: and the Reason he gives for such Interpretation, and his Inference from it, seem worthy the Attention of all Polygamists, that they may perceive not only by what sound Criticism, but also by what powerful Evidence of Reason and Revelation their Cause can be supported.

Our Author, aware that if he cannot limit the Word Woman in this Passage to an espoused or married Woman, the marrying two or three, or indeed more than one Virgin or Widow at once, must be here condemned as Adultery, hath very consistently with his Attempts upon other Passages, hereafter to be considered, endeavoured to persuade us, that the original Word here translated Woman, "cannot mean a Woman as generally distinguished from a Man; for, saith he, if it be sinful to look with Desire on any Woman *whatsoever*, then it would

be sinful for a Man to desire his own Wife to whom he is lawfully married, or a Virgin to whom he is contracted; and this, saith our author, (who is particularly fond of running out into Consequences, and entertaining and well-known Anecdotes and Fables), would lead us into all the Absurdities of the ancient Misogamists, who held Marriage to be sinful. In this Place, therefore, proceeds he, it certainly means a Woman considered as related to a Man, and that whether espoused, or that hath cohabited with her Husband, for with no other *can* Adultery be committed. For want of such Distinction, some Commentators, adds he, by letting loose their own Imaginations, have filled many of their Readers with Matter of sore Distress and Bondage of Conscience, as if the Desire after any Female whatsoever came within what they call the spiritual Import of the Seventh Commandment," P. 121. But our Author, in endeavouring to release us from these Matters of *sore* Distress and *Bondage* of Conscience, with which, for want of his *recondite* Distinction, some, I would say the Bulk of the most judicious and learned Commentators, 'have filled us,' unhappily hath really let loose his *own* Imagination, and made a Distinction where



no Difference subsists, and hath proceeded so far as to advance a Position that hath no Foundation in the New Testament, even at the Expence of impeaching the Truth of his own preceding Assertions.

Our Author here expressly contradicts himself. For, in p. 42, he asserts, "that there are no specific Names for married Persons in the Old or New Testament, but only Words for a Man and Woman, that signify Persons of the male and female Sex in general; but when coupled with Pronouns possessive, as ο ανης σου, thy Man, and η γυνη αυτη, his Woman, they denote the marriage Relation."

Such being our Author's Concession, let us review the Original of this Passage of St. Matthew, and see whether any Pronoun possessive is coupled in it with the original Word for a Woman, or it means according to his Rule, only a Woman, or Female in general.

The original Words need only be read to settle this Point, and are these, Εγω δε λεγω υμιν οτι πας ο βλεπων γυναικα τυρος το επιθυμησαι αυτης, ηδη εμοιχευσεν αυτην εν τη καρδια αυτη—

The Words here being *αβλεπων γυναικα* without any Pronoun possessive coupled with *γυναικα*, or a Woman, according to our Author's own Rule, must mean any Woman in general, be she Virgin, Widow or Wife. Such are the extraordinary Observations and Deductions of our Author respecting this Passage of Scripture; in farther Reply to which, we must therefore remind him, that it most evidently condemns the personal Intercourse of a married Man with any unmarried Woman; that it most certainly proves that the Desire after any Female in general, except his own Wife, comes within what is called the spiritual Import of the seventh Commandment, that it condemns all Polygamy as Adultery, and therefore evinceth the Error of our Author's Assertion, that Adultery cannot be committed with any but an espoused or married Woman. Adultery certainly cannot be committed in the Instance mentioned by the Author of Thelyphthora; though it hath been suggested, that a Case might occur in which a Man could be guilty of a Breach of the seventh Commandment, with his own Wife. But we shall decline the Consideration of such Instance, and all visionary Refinements respecting it, nor particularly take Notice of this Writer's extraordinary



traordinary Suggestion, that " the Word Woman, here, must signify a married Woman, or else a Man who looks with Desire on his Wife, must commit Adultery with her;" as if any Woman in *general*, meant any Woman *whatsoever*, and no general Term allowed of any Exception. Dismissing such merely illusive Quibbles, and evasive Artifices, let us readily grant that the Woman here meant, must be such an one as Adultery can be committed with; and remind our Reader, that the Author, when he defined Adultery to be the Commerce of the Sexes where the Woman is the Wife of another Man, p. 57, should have truly completed the Definition; by adding also that it is the Commerce of the Sexes where the Man is the Husband of another Woman: for our blessed Lord hath expressly declared, that whosoever putteth away his Wife and marrieth another, or hath Commerce with another, committeth Adultery against her, his first Wife.

No matter, therefore, whether the Woman desired be married or not; for if the Man who looks with Desire on her, be married, he committeth Adultery in his Heart; and if an unmarried Man thus looks with Desire on a  
 Woman

Woman with whom Adultery can be committed, that is, on a married Woman, *he*, also, committeth Adultery with her in his Heart. Not both, but one of the Parties undoubtedly, must, be married, as we cannot suppose our Saviour to be here prescribing a Law against a Case, or Instance that can never subsist. But yet, nothing can be more evident from our Lord's Words than, that whosoever looketh with Desire on a Woman with whom he can commit Adultery, a married Woman, or a single Woman, if he be married, the Word Woman denoting all Women in general, is an Adulterer, or hath already committed Adultery with her in his Heart.

Our Author's Distinction, therefore, hath here no Foundation; nor have our Commentators let loose their Imaginations beyond the Truth, though they have declared that the irregular Desire after any Female whatsoever, with whom Adultery can be committed, comes within the spiritual Import of the seventh Commandment. Nor can any thing hence be more evident, than that Polygamy is a sin under the Dispensation of the Gospel, and that therefore the Prohibition of it *hath Warrant*  
from



from the Word of God. For as our Saviour hath here expressly assured us, that whosoever looketh with irregular Desire after any Woman with whom Adultery can be committed, hath already committed Adultery with her in his Heart; most certainly he who marrieth, or hath personal Intercourse with her, must also be guilty of Adultery. With respect to the Conduct of the Patriarchs, and other Saints who lived before the Promulgation of the Gospel, we shall not enquire into it, nor consider for what Reasons Polygamy was then permitted. Their Example is by no Means in every respect the Object of our Attention.

The Pattern of our blessed Lord is the only Object intitled to our Imitation, as it exemplifies such a complete and perfect Plan of Piety and Morality, as was never before his Incarnation vouchsafed to Mankind. Our Author may be averse from subscribing to this Truth, but hath afforded us an accessional Proof of it. For as the Gospel enjoins a purer Conduct, and prohibits all Polygamy which was permitted by the Old Testament, such Prohibition evinceth the Superiority of the Rule prescribed to our Behaviour in the former, to that of the latter.

It appears also, from the Passages adduced, that, contrary to our Author's Assertions, the Thought of Adultery and Polygamy were really *first condemned* when Christ said, whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath already committed Adultery with her in his Heart; and that Adultery, therefore, meant not "*quite as much in Moses's Time, as in the Days of Christ and his Apostles;*" that the Thought of Adultery, when Polygamy was permitted, was *not* so sinful as it would have been in St. Paul under the Gospel; that the Scribes and Pharisees were ignorant of the spiritual Sense of the Law; that our Saviour informed them, that unjust Divorce and Polygamy were unlawful under his Dispensation; that not only our exterior Conduct, but our very Thoughts, might be sinful and adulterous, which the Law that forbade them to covet was not understood by them to mean; and that therefore our Lord hath introduced a new Law or Direction concerning those Points.

The Author of Thelyphthora, in Page 192, asserts, that "it is probable that Polygamy was very frequent amongst the first Christians." "Why, saith he, did Paul recommend the Choice of Bishops from amongst those who had  
but



but one Wife? What Occasion for this Caution, if none had more than one?"—In Reply to this Assertion, it might be observed, that after all Suggestions respecting the admitting Converts to the Rites of the Church, who were Polygamists, it might, perhaps, be supported, that not every Man who had long been in Habits of Vice, and Error, could, at once, relinquish them, and perfectly conform, in every Instance, to so pure and strict a Rule of Behaviour as that of the Gospel; and that the divine Wisdom might at first, therefore, avoid too great Rigour in condemning Polygamy, and yet fix such a Mark of Infamy upon so irregular a Practice, as to forbid any one, however extraordinary his Character might be, to undertake the Ministry, who was guilty of it; and also to discourage and condemn it by express Injunctions against it.

This, it is to be confessed, may appear a larger Concession than is necessary in the present Case. For the Injunction of one Wife refers by no Means to the Conduct of the first Christians after their Conversion, but to the Practices of the Jews and Pagans; and we have no Authority from Scripture to assert, that the first Chris-

mans were permitted to be Polygamists, but as our Lord and his Apostles have so particularly prohibited it, have Reason to believe that they conformed to their Prohibitions respecting it.

The Words of the Apostle by no Means authorise us to assert, that the first, or many of the first Christians, were Polygamists after their Conversion. We are very sensible that at the Time when St. Paul wrote the Epistle to Timothy before us, many of the Jews and Pagans were Polygamists, and also particularly guilty of unjustly divorcing their Wives, and marrying others. And, from our Knowledge of this Practice, we learn the true Sense of the Passage before us, in which he enjoins that a Bishop be the Husband of one Wife; which is this, that he have avoideth the Practice of the Jews and Greeks, and not, like them, been guilty of unjustly divorcing one Wife, and marrying another. The Passage therefore evidently refers, not to the Practices of the first Christians after their Conversion, but to those of the Jews and Pagans; and, instead of advancing, directly militates against Polygamy, or the Supposition that the first Christians were guilty of it, by enjoining that a Bishop be not one who hath unjustly



justly divorced one Wife, and married another, or that in this respect he be the Husband of one Wife, which he could not be if he had married a second Wife during the Life of the first, whom he had unjustly dismissed.

The Apostle's Words in this Passage, therefore, *carry no tacit Allowance* of Polygamy, but a direct Prohibition of it, and an obvious Reference to the Practices of the Jews and Greeks, who were guilty of Polygamy and unlawful Divorces, which he forbids as inconsistent with the Conduct of a Christian Pastor, and the Purity of Manners enjoined by the Gospel; and our Author, indeed, might as well have inferred from the Injunctions of St. Paul in this Chapter, that a Bishop ought to be no Striker, not given to much Wine, and not covetous; that Wrath, Intemperance and Covetousness, were frequent amongst the first Christians, as that they were Polygamists, and construe every Prohibition of Vice into a tacit Allowance of it, and an Impeachment of the Conduct of all to whom it was addressed.

But let us attend to our Writer's Remarks upon Part of the Seventh Chapter of the First Epistle

**Epistle to the Corinthians.** The Apostle in this Chapter answered some Questions of the Corinthians respecting the conjugal State, and in the introductory Verses determines that in some Cases it should be entered into, and continued in, and in others avoided. ' Nevertheless, to avoid, or on Account of Fornications, saith the Apostle, let every Man have, or retain his own Wife; and let every Woman have, and retain her own proper Husband. Let the Husband render due Benevolence to the Wife, and in like Manner also the Wife unto the Husband. For the Wife hath not Power over her own Body, but the Husband; and the Husband hath not Power over his own Body, but the Wife—their Engagements being mutual, they are obliged to remain appropriate to each other.' Our Author paraphrases these Words thus: ' Let every Man retain the Woman who belongs to him, and not lend her out or suffer her to marry another, nor let him take a Woman who is not his Wife, but another Man's, to himself. So also let every Woman have her own proper Husband; the Man appropriated to her exclusively of all other Men upon Earth, and not depart, or suffer herself to be lent or given to any other Man. Let the Husband render to the Wife due  
Benevo-



Benevolence, and likewise the Wife unto the Husband. The Wife hath not Power over her own Body, so as to withdraw herself from the conjugal Debt; but the Husband may, as Matter of Right, have Access to her at all proper Times and Seasons. Likewise the Husband has not Power over his own Body, so as to withdraw from the conjugal Intercourse, with his Wife; but the Wife, as a Debt due from the Contract which the Man is under to her by the very Terms of their Union, has a Right to his Society. Therefore defraud ye not one the other, &c.

With respect to this our Author's Paraphrase, it may be observed, that the Word in the Original, here translated *have* or *retain*, (in the Verse, "Let every Man *have* his own Wife, and every Woman *have* her own proper Husband,") is the same in both Parts of the Verse; and therefore should convey the same Ideas or Intjunction, when it coheres with the Words 'every Woman,' or the Wife, as when it agrees with the Words 'every Man,' or the Husband. Our Author, therefore, had no Authority from the Original to suggest that the Apostle in these Passages intended to impose any greater Restriction upon the Wife than upon the Husband;

but

but that, as he here enjoins that every Man shall have his own Wife, and not lend her out, or suffer her to marry another Man; so, also, he enjoins that every Woman shall have her own proper Husband, and not suffer *him* to be lent out, or marry any other Woman.

We may hence also observe, that the original Words, here translated 'her own proper Husband,' imply, as before remarked, not only such an Appropriation of the Husband to the Wife, as that *she* should not go to any other, but more naturally and obviously, such an Appropriation of the Husband to the Wife, exclusively of all other Women, that *he* should not marry, or have personal Intercourse with any other; and that our Author had no Ground for the Limitation here introduced, by subjoining the Apostle's Injunction, a Prohibition extending to *only* a matrimonial Connexion with 'another Man's Wife:' when a married Man, during the Life of his first Wife, except in case of lawful Divorce, hath no Power to marry, or have personal Intercourse with any other, but is obliged to remain appropriated to his first Wife, exclusively of all other Women whatsoever.

We



We readily grant, that the Corinthians were guilty of Fornication and Adultery, of lending out their Wives, and having Women in common. Let us add, that they also, as well as other Heathens; and the Jews, were guilty of Divorce and Polygamy.

Yet, what one Deduction can hence be derived in favour of Polygamy? And, what can more evidently evince the Unlawfulness of Polygamy than the Passages of St. Paul before us?

If, according to our Author's Rule, we interpret them by the general Tenor of the New Testament, nothing can more plainly evince the Unlawfulness of Polygamy.

The general Tenor of the Declarations of our blessed Lord and his Apostles, is, that whosoever dismisseth his Wife, except for Fornication, and marrieth another, committeth Adultery against her, and that we are to conform to the primitive Institution of Matrimony, which could not permit Polygamy. The Apostle, therefore, by commanding that every Man should have or retain his own Wife, and

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every Woman her own proper Husband, must certainly mean to forbid not only all Fornication, and unjust Divorce, but also all Adultery and Polygamy. The same Truth is glaringly evident also, from the subsequent Words that 'the Wife hath not Power over her own Body, but the Husband:' and, in *like Manner*, also, 'the Husband hath not Power over *his* own Body, but the Wife;' they being obliged to continue appropriate to each other. It hence evidently appears that the Wife's Right is equal to that of the Husband, expressed in exactly the same Words and declared to be the same, *ομοιος δε και ο αυτος*, and that as the Husband hath Power over the Person of the Wife, so also, in like Manner, hath the Wife Power over the Person of her Husband. That therefore also the original Words *ιδιον αυτου* and *αυτης γυναικα*, rendered her own proper Husband, and his own Wife, after all, mean but the same Thing, unless the Difference was made with a particular View to the Discouragement of Polygamy, and unjust Divorce, and evince her peculiar Right to the *whole* Person of her Husband.

Certainly,



Certainly, such are the Laws of Christ, and his Apostles, concerning "the Business of Divorce and Polygamy," which therefore, contrary to our Author's Assertion, depend *not* "*wholly upon the Law of Moses.*" Moses permitted Polygamy, and unjust Divorce; Christ prohibits both, and hath reduced Marriage to its primitive Institution; therefore he hath certainly introduced a new, or another Law respecting them.

With regard to our Author's Assertion, that St. Paul's Injunction concerning the Choice of the Pastors of the Church, must imply that there were many Christians, '*not who had had, but who, at the Time when he wrote, had more Wives than one;*' and that '*if this had not been the Case, it would have been as much out of the Question to have mentioned the having but one Wife, as to have said that none should be chosen but those who had but one Head, or one Body, when it was not to be supposed that any Man had more.*' P. 205.

Be it observed, that the Case is not parallel, for though we cannot suppose a Man to have more than one Head, or Body, yet he certainly might have not been fit for the Ministry, as he

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might have been one who had divorced one Wife, and married another; and therefore not so blameless and irreproachable, as the Apostle requires him to be. As to our Author's Remark, that the Injunction of the Apostle must imply that many of the first Converts to Christianity were Polygamists, because in his Epistle to Titus the Words are, *Εἰ τις ἐστὶν μίαν γυναῖκα ἀνδρα;* 'if any be the Husband of one Wife,' and therefore must relate to the *then* Situation of the Converts to Christianity; it is to be observed, that our Author hath here omitted a Word in this Passage. For St. Paul, directing Titus on what Principles he should proceed in the Choice of Christian Pastors, here saith, *Εἰ τις ἐστὶν ἀνεκκλητός, μίαν γυναῖκα ἀνδρα*—'If any one be blameless; the Husband of one Wife.' This Omission, it is presumed, was intended to more closely connect the *Εἰ τις ἐστὶν* with *μίαν γυναῖκα ἀνδρα*, and thus cause the Apostle to appear to more strongly speak to our Writer's Purpose.

But this is not the Apostle's Intention; for though the Word *ἐστὶν*, or *be*, is here used in the present Tense, yet the Passage, as before evinced, refers not to the Polygamy of Christians after their Conversion, but to the *then* Situation of Jews and Pagans, and the former Conduct



duct of those Converts who had been guilty of Polygamy or unlawful Divorce before their Conversion, and therefore *had had* more than one Wife; and accordingly the Apostle, who required that the Pastors of the Christian Church should be Persons of exemplary Purity, and eminent for every social and personal Virtue, enjoins that they be not chosen from amongst those who had had more than one Wife, or unjustly dismissed one and married another; but that if a Person *be* the Husband of one Wife, *i. e.* hath not *unjustly* dismissed one Wife and married another, he might be constituted a Bishop.

Our Author's Position therefore hath no Foundation from the Passage before us; and I conceive that we might as well suppose that all the first Christians were guilty after their Conversion, of Extortion, Theft, Covetousness, Idolatry, and of all other Vices mentioned in St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, as of Polygamy. But St. Paul hath assured us to the contrary; and having particularly mentioned Fornicators, Whoremongers, and Adulterers, as well as Persons who were guilty of the preceding Vices, informs us, that such were some  
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of the Corinthians in their unconverted State, but that divine Grace had produced an happy Change in their State and Disposition, and they were now, since their Conversion, washed, sanctified, and purified.

Our Author observes upon these Passages of St. Paul, that it can hardly be supposed that if Polygamy were sinful, the great Apostle should be so liberal and particular in his Epistle to the Corinthians, in condemning other Species of illicit Commerce between the Sexes, and yet omit this in his black Catalogue. In Reply to this Suggestion, we must observe, that though the Apostle hath not inserted the Word Polygamy in that Catalogue, yet hath he, by no Means, omitted to condemn the Crime it denotes.

For the Apostle in the Passages before us precautions the Corinthians of the fatal Effects of those Sins in which they had indulged themselves before their Conversion, and against all vain Imaginations that their having embraced Christianity would secure them in the Practice of them. ' Be not deceived, saith he, neither Fornicators, nor Idolators, nor Adulterers, nor  
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Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God, and such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Polygamy, a Community of Women, Divorce and Adultery, being, confessedly, the Crimes of which the Corinthians were guilty before their Conversion, and that occasioned this Epistle of St. Paul, most certainly, he hath here shewn his Zeal for the Law of Marriage, and condemned Polygamy as well as other Species of illicit Commerce between the Sexes, when he assureth them, that neither Fornicators nor Adulterers shall inherit the Kingdom of God. If our Judgment respecting the Meaning of the Apostle should, as our Author agrees, be directed by the Consideration of the Manners and Customs of the Corinthians, and the Tenour of the New Testament; the lending their Wives, a Community of Women, Divorce and Polygamy, being, at the Time St. Paul wrote, the Crimes they were guilty of; and this Apostle having declared that the Husband hath no Power to transfer his Person to a second Wife

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during the Life of his first, and our blessed Lord having, in various Passages, expressly asserted, that whosoever shall unjustly dismiss his Wife, and marry another, committeth Adultery against her, St. Paul must have considered Polygamy as Adultery, and therefore, when he here condemns Fornication and Adultery, he condemns Polygamy as well as other Species of illicit Commerce of the Sexes. If farther Proofs need be adduced, evincing that St. Paul hath condemned Polygamy as Adultery, and that the early Christians were not Polygamists, those Proofs will occur in the immediately subsequent Observations.

Our Author, Page 380, again considers the Passages of our Lord in the Gospels of St. Matthew and Mark, respecting Divorce and Polygamy, and repeats the Assertion, that our Lord was not laying down a new Law; and that had he attempted any Thing opposite to the Law of Moses, he would have fallen into the Snare of the Pharisees, who questioned him with a View to reproach him as an Enemy to it.—The Pharisees, proceeds our Author, attempted no Reply, which would certainly not have been the Case, had they understood him to have spoken



ken against Polygamy; neither did his own Disciples understand him to speak of any Thing but Divorce; for their Conclusion is, "If the Case of a Man be so with his Wife, it is not good to marry;" i. e. if a Man cannot get rid of his Wife when he pleaseth, he had better not marry at all. P. 384.—The Conclusion, saith our Author, must have been made from their understanding Christ to speak of Divorce; for it is totally foreign from the Matter of Polygamy. How could they possibly mean that a Man had better have no Wife at all, if he could not have more than one at once? It must likewise be supposed that they did not misunderstand their Master; for if they had, he would doubtless have set them right in his Reply, and not have said what clearly shews them to have understood him right."

In Reply to these Suggestions, be it observ'd, that the Pharisees attempted no reproachful Answer to our Lord's Prohibition of unjust Divorce, though they plainly understood that his Prohibition was contrary to the Mosaic Permission. Why, therefore should our Author assert, that if they had understood our Lord to have

spoken against Polygamy, they would certainly have replied to him?

With respect to our Lord's Disciples, the very Reply which our Lord made to their Conclusion, from which our Author asserts that it appears that they understood him aright, evinceth that his Discourses related to both Polygamy and Divorce, or at least that the former was deducible from, and necessarily implied in them.

Our Lord's Disciples say, "If this be the Case between a Man and his Wife, it is not good to marry." But he said to them, "All Men cannot receive this Saying, that it is not good to marry, but only they to whom it is given, or who are able to subdue their Inclinations towards the conjugal State." If Polygamy was allowed as lawful by our Lord, and his Disciples had more than one Wife each, his Reply would not have been pertinent to their Interference. For in such Case, there would have been no Occasion to have said, that 'all Men cannot receive this Saying,' since, if one of a Disciple's Wives was disagreeable to him, he would have had others that would prevent his Inability to receive that Saying, or govern his Inclinations.



Inclinations towards the conjugal Union. The Disciples, therefore, meant, not ' that they had better have no Wife at all, if they could not have more than one ;' but that, as they could not have more than one Wife at once, they had better not marry, than be obliged to retain such a one as might render them unhappy.

The Conclusion, therefore, is by no means foreign to the Matter of Polygamy any more than to that of Divorce, but is evidently deduced from their Obligation to have no more than one Wife at once, and undeniably evinceth, that they understood our Lord's Discourse to relate to both Polygamy and Divorce.

Our Author, in Page 385, affirms, that the Word *another*, in the Passage, ' whoever shall put away his Wife, except it be for Fornication, and shall marry another, committeth Adultery against her,' must agree with the antecedent *γυναίκα*, or Wife; that therefore the Word *Wife* must be understood as following the Word *ἄλλην*, another, and this may be construed in the Sense of *ἁλλοτρίαν γυναίκα*, *another Man's*

*Man's Wife*; and this extraordinary Construction, he observes, is confirmed by the first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which the Word *αλλης* is so used, *υπο αλλης συνειδησεως*, being there rightly translated, "another Man's Conscience." St. Paul, giving Directions concerning the eating Things offered to Idols, recommends the abstaining from them to avoid Offence, and for Conscience-sake. 'Conscience, saith he, not thine own, but of the others, who may be offended; for, in Acts obvious to Observation, this is to be recommended, but in what lies between God and my Soul, why is my Liberty judged of another Man's Conscience?' *υπο αλλης συνειδησεως*. Of what Service this Quotation can be to our Author's Cause, is to all who read it, surely! a Problem. He cannot, certainly, mean that the Word *αλλης* means *only* another *Man's* Conscience, and that it doth not also mean another *Woman's* Conscience! Or shall we suppose him to have adopted the Assertion that Women have no Souls, and that therefore all the Apostles Directions were only intended for the Conduct of their Husbands?

Our Author's Construction, and designed Limitation of the Sense of this Passage, can  
neither



neither be defended by the original Words, nor general Tenor of the New Testament. For though the original Word, γυναικα, hath a Pronoun possessive coupled with it in the former Part of this Verse, as γυναικα αυτη, and therefore is rightly rendered his Wife, yet, what Authority can we have from the latter Part of it, where we have only αλλην, to affirm, that, if we understand the Word γυναικα to follow it, it must also be coupled with a Pronoun possessive, or be understood as if it was? The Verse, in Truth, will admit of no such Construction; nor could possibly, even with his utmost Violence, be pressed into his Service. Whosoever putteth away his Wife, except it be for Fornication, and marrieth another Wife, that is, *any* other Woman, be she Virgin, or Widow, whom he shall make his Wife, committeth Adultery against her, is undeniably the most natural and obvious, and the only Sense in which any impartial Reader of the Words can possibly understand them. Let us, by a familiar Instance, exhibit the Absurdity of such forced Interpretation as our Author hath adopted.

Suppose two Bankers or Merchants, Adventurers for Life, had articulated, that no third

Person should be admitted to a Partnership in their Houses, and according to such the original Design of their Contract, it should by Deed be expressed that, "Whosoever of them, without reasonable Cause, shall dismiss his Partner and article with another, committeth Injustice against him, &c. Would any Court of Justice hesitate one Moment to pronounce the Party who should presume to thus dismiss his Partner, and article with another, to be guilty of Injustice, and liable to such Penalty as ought to be adjudged to such Procedure?

Could the Offender, in this Case, exculpate himself by pleading, that he had not articulated with one who had been unjustly dismissed from a Partnership with others, but that he was one who had never before been in Business?

Would any one who wanted not to make the Words of the said Deed conform to his own Prejudices and Designs, instead of regulating his own Sentiments by it, ever dream of pressing so plain, and express a Declaration into his Service by offering so great Violence to it? Would any impartial Reader ever conceive, that the Word, *another*, in "Whosoever shall dismiss



dismiss his Partner, and article with another, must mean, not any Man whatsoever, but only one who had before been *another Man's Partner*?

What an extraordinary Figure must a Pleader make who should adopt our Author's Mode of Interpretation, and thus comment upon these Words! "Whosoever shall, without reasonable Cause, dismiss his Partner, and article with another, committeth Injustice against him." "The Word another, must agree with the Antecedent, Partner; therefore the Word Partner must be understood as following the Word another, and this may be construed in the Sense of another Man's Partner." "And therefore whosoever dismisseth his Partner, and articles with another who hath not been in Business before, is not guilty of, or committeth no Injustice against him."

I am confident that Men in Business will view such Mode of Construction with no small Degree of Surprise, and not in the least be disposed to thank our Author for so *shrewd* a Comment. Nor can it be conceived, as the sacred Writings are our Rule of Sentiment and Conduct, that Society will acknowledge any Obligations for such Violence offered to them, since,

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by such Measures, they may be compelled to subscribe to the most pernicious Positions that any partial Writer may chuse to advance. Indeed, such being our Author's Mode of Interpretation, it must be confessed, that after all his Harangues concerning popular Error, and his entertaining and anile Fables, not to forget that of the respectable Whittington, we cannot give that Credit to his Judgment and Impartiality, to which his Imagination may suggest he hath a Right.

In Truth, after such our Author's Mode of Interpretation, we cannot even consider him, as he seems to represent himself, in his second Volume, in so elevated and illuminated a Situation as 'the radiant Inhabitant of the Moon,' though as he hath been erecting Castles in the Air, he may probably have had a more than ordinary Connexion with that Satellite. To this Suggestion it is apprehended that some, who consider his laudable Attempts to assert Polygamy, and recommend it to the Patronage of those in Power, may be inclined to subscribe, and at the same Time applaud his Modesty, and *Diffidence*, when he ascribes to himself a peerless Infallibility, and represents all those who shall presume

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to dissent from him, as fit to be only ranked with the Tribe of merely impotent Scoffers, Cavillers, and Objectors, perhaps unworthy of a Superiority to the presumptuous Quadrupede that vainly "insulted the Glories of the peerless Reign of the Moon."—But to proceed,

Neither our Author's extraordinary Construction, nor the Practices of Divorce and Exchange of Wives that prevailed amongst the Jews and Pagans, can evince that a married Man could not be guilty of Adultery, unless his second Wife was a divorced Woman. This Truth we have already sufficiently evinced, but with a View to some Suggestions of our Author that have not been noticed, shall repeat a Part of what hath been offered, with some accessional Observations respecting them.

Our blessed Lord, in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, declareth, that ' whoso marrieth her that is put away, committeth Adultery.' But these Words can by no Means evince, that the married Man who during the Life of his first Wife marrieth another who was a Virgin or Widow, or any other single Woman, commith not Adul-

tery, there being no such particular Limitations in these or any other Passages of our Lord and his Apostles respecting this Subject. The Suggestions of our Author and others upon this Point, are merely conjectural, unsupported by any particular Evidence, and contrary to the various Declarations of the New Testament.

Our blessed Lord expressly declareth in St. Matthew's Gospel, that whosoever shall put away his Wife, except it be for Fornication, and shall marry another, committeth Adultery;—and in St. Mark's Gospel, that whosoever shall put away his Wife and marry another, committeth Adultery against her.—Here are evidently no Limitations of Adultery to the alone Instance of a married Man marrying a divorced Woman, or another Man's Wife, but the Words are obviously general. The Word, *another*, evidently being a general Term, and denoting any other Woman, be she Virgin or Widow, any Woman whom he shall presume to take as a Wife during the Life of his first. Our Author suggests, Page 374, that had our Lord intended to have



condemned those who were guilty of Polygamy, "he would scarcely have made Use of Words which do not describe their Situation, but of Words that did. It is very plain, proceeds he, that he that putteth away his Wife by giving her a Bill of Divorcement, could have nothing to do with the Man who took two Wives together, or one to another, and cohabited with both." But, surely! it is very plain that whosoever putteth away his Wife and marrieth another, committeth Adultery, *hath* something to do with the Man who took two Wives together, as well as with him who should unlawfully divorce them. Had not our Author ended the Quotation at the Word *Divorcement*, and given us but a *Part* of the Verse, the Reader must have seen that it *had* something to do with the Polygamist; and this being the Case, our Lord hath used Words descriptive of his Situation.

Before our Author had attempted the precise Limitation of these Words to the Case of Divorce alone, he should have been able to have evinced that Divorce and Exchange of Wives were the *only* Practices of the Jews and Pagans at the Time of our Lord's Incarnation, and thence have deduced that such Practices must be the  
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only Objects of these Discourses, and that consequently Divorce alone was the Subject intended by them. But our Author will acknowledge that the History of that Period evinceth, that not only Divorce and Exchange of Wives, but a Community of Women and Polygamy, or Fornication and Adultery, were the Practices of that Age: and, therefore, without 'interpreting Scripture according to our own Conceits, but by considering the Times when, Places where, and Situations of the Persons to whom it was addressed,' we farther deduce, that they afford no Ground for such Limitation as our Author would fix upon them.

With respect to the general Tenor of the New Testament, nothing can be more inconsistent with it than our Author's extraordinary Limitation. The New Testament gives no more Power to a married Man to marry another Woman, during the Life of his first Wife, than it gives to a Wife to marry another Man during the Life of her first Husband. St. Paul expressly commands both Husband and Wife, to continue inviolably, and intirely appropriate to each other.



To avoid Fornication, saith he, as before observed, let every Man have his own Wife, and let every Woman have her own proper Husband; let the Husband render to the Wife due Benevolence, and likewise also the Wife to the Husband: The Wife hath not Power over her own Body, but the Husband; and likewise also, the Husband hath not Power over his own Body, but the Wife. Defraud ye not therefore one another, &c. The Rights of both Wife and Husband are here declared to be equal, the Husband hath not Power over his own Body, but the Wife; the Wife hath not Power over her own body, but the Husband. If it be urged that the Husband may yet, according to these Words, divide his Attention, and have more Wives than one, it may be also urged, that the Wife may divide *her* Attention, and have more *Husbands* than one. To seriously affirm that each may so do, is to be seriously absurd; and assert that both Husband and Wife have, and have not, the Power over each others Persons, at the same Time. If the Wife hath Power over the Person of her Husband he cannot confer it upon another Woman; and if the Husband hath Power over the Person

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of his Wife, she cannot transfer it to another Man.

The Wife, under the Dispensation of the Gospel, may certainly plead the same Rights, in that Respect, as her Husband, the Apostle having made no sort of Difference in the Case before us. And our Saviour also speaks the same Truth: for he not only declares, that if a Woman shall put away her Husband, and marry another, *she* committeth Adultery; but also that whosoever shall put away his Wife, except for Fornication, and marry another, committeth Adultery against her. Mark 10.

The Passages of the New Testament, respecting the Laws of Matrimony, therefore, declare the Rights of both Husband and Wife, to be equal, as to the Point before us, and exclude all Pretence for such Limitation as some, by forced and erroneous Expositions, would extort from them.

I shall dismiss this Point with the subsequent farther Observations upon our Author's extraordinary Construction of the former Part of the ninth Verse of the nineteenth of St. Matthew.

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Our Author desiring to assert the Privilege of a married Man marrying any Woman except another Man's Wife; let us just remark the Absurdity of such Limitation, and assert the Rights of the Wife, by translating a similar Passage of St. Mark, according to our Author's Mode of Construction.

The Word, *another*, in whosoever shall put away his Wife and marry another, saith our Author, ' must agree with the Antecedent, Wife; therefore the Word, *Wife*, must be understood as following the Word, *another*; and may be rendered in the Sense of another Man's Wife.'

According to such Translation of this Passage of St. Matthew, let us translate the following Passage of St. Mark: ' If a Woman shall put away her Husband, and marry another, she committeth Adultery.'

The Word *another*, say we, must here agree with the Antecedent, *ανδρα*, or *Husband*; therefore the Word *Husband* must be understood as following the Word *αλλω*, or *another*, and this may be construed another Woman's Husband.

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According to such Mode of Interpretation, therefore, our Lord's Words can here only mean that, if a Woman shall put away her Husband and marry another Woman's Husband, she committeth Adultery: and the plain and obvious Inference deducible from this Interpretation is, that our Wives may put us away, and at once marry as many other Men as they please, provided they are not the Husbands of other Women, without being guilty of Adultery.

Such forced and unwarrantable Interpretations of Scripture may, perhaps, be permitted to evince the Absurdity of them; but, surely! should, in all other Instances, be cautiously avoided, lest the Ignorant be deceived, and the Vicious encouraged to persevere in a Conduct that may prove fatal to their most important Interests.

With respect to the Consideration of the Law of Moses, the divine Permissions extended to those who were under it, and other Suggestions of this Writer before us, they exceed the Limits of my Design; which was, to consider only the Passages of the New Testament,



ment, respecting the Laws of Marriage, that he hath erroneously interpreted; and evince that Polygamy, allowed under the old Testament, is prohibited by Christ and his Apostles; because upon their Authority alone, depends the Truth of that Point here treated.

Our Author, however, having endeavoured to deduce the Lawfulness of Polygamy from the Mosaic Permission of it, and our Lord's Declarations that he came not to destroy the Mosaic moral Law, but to fulfil it, I shall conclude what hath been offered, with some Observations respecting such this Writer's Deduction.

The Laws of the Old and New Testament certainly afford a complete Rule of Sentiment and Conduct. But yet, as, according to our Author's Assertion, the Law of Moses permitted Polygamy and unjust Divorces, and Polygamy and unjust Divorces are prohibited by the Gospel, we cannot but in those Respects, amongst others, consider the Gospel as a more perfect, explicit, and complete Rule of Sentiment, and Conduct, than the Law; and, consequently,

sequently, than any that was ever before vouchsafed to Mankind.

Our blessed Lord, exhorting to Beneficence, and reproving the Pharisees for their Derision, and undue Attachment to secular Pursuits, acquaints them, that a Dispensation was opening to the World, that would prove adequate to the Conviction of their Errors, and a perfect and effectual Rule of Behaviour.

‘ The Law and the Prophets, said he, were until John; since that Time, the Kingdom of God is preached, and every one presseth into it.’

Yet, it is easier for Heaven and Earth to pass away, than for one Tittle of the Law to fail.

And then, to evince that he meant to advance and perfect, and not destroy or impair the Law, he added that ‘ Whosoever puts away his Wife, and marries another, commits Adultery.’ Luke 16.

Our Lord’s Design in these Passages, evidently, is to suggest that he and John had revealed



vealed a more excellent Rule of Sentiment and Conduct than that afforded by the Law and Prophets; that he and John had prescribed more noble Precepts respecting Benevolence and Beneficence, and a proper Contempt of the World, than could be found in the Law or Prophets; who endeavoured to influence Men to the Performance of their Duty in general, by only temporal Motives. The Kingdom of God is now preached, said he, and every one presseth into it; being superior to the Influence of secular Objects, and animated by the most undoubted Assurances of endless Bliss and Glory. And, as a farther Instance in Proof of this Truth, as well as that he came to perfect the Law of Moses, he said, that 'Whosoever puts away his Wife and marrieth another, commits Adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her Husband, commits Adultery;' intimating that the Law permitted unjust Divorces, but the Gospel expressly forbids them. And, in the Verse immediately preceding, obviating any Suggestion respecting his having a Design to destroy the Law, he declared, that 'Heaven and Earth should sooner pass away, than one Tittle of the Law fail;' according to his Declarations in other Passages, that he came  
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not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it; that instead of abating the Force of it, he, as in the Instances adduced, came *πληρῶσαι*, to fulfil, advance, perfect, and complete it.

Our blessed Lord was the true Light that enlighteneth every Man that cometh into the World, or, according to the Hebrew Mode of speaking, every Man that is born of Woman. He was the true Light that enlighteneth every Man, both Jews and Pagans, *πάντα ἀνθρώπων ἐρχομενὸν εἰς τὸ κόσμον*, and came idto the World, not surely to perform what was unnecessary, and only what Moses had *already* done? If this had been the Case, if Moses had sufficiently enlightened every Man, how could the Evangelist here stile our Saviour, *τὸ φῶς ἀληθινὸν ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἀνθρώπων ἐρχομενὸν εἰς τὸν κόσμον*, the true Light that enlighteneth all Men, both Jews and Gentiles, that come into the World?

Our Lord is certainly the true and only Light that *duly* enlighteneth every Man that cometh into the World. For he alone hath brought Life and Immortality to *full* Light, afforded us the most undoubted Assurances of eternal Happiness in a future State, and shewed us the



Way that will infallibly lead to it, by prescribing such a perfect and complete Rule of Sentiment and Conduct, as was never before his Incarnation revealed to Mankind.

Our Saviour came not to destroy the typical, prophetic, or moral Part of the Law, but to fulfil what was typified by the Law, and foretold by the Prophets, to assert the full and spiritual Import of the Mosaic moral Law, and to advance and complete it. Our Author having asserted, that Polygamy was permitted by the Mosaic Law, and therefore not immoral, can have no Pretence upon such Supposition to affirm, that our Lord, by prohibiting Polygamy, hath destroyed one Tittle of the moral Law of Moses. For if Polygamy, permitted by Moses, be not immoral, and therefore hath no relation to the moral Law, our Lord by prohibiting Polygamy, cannot have destroyed any Part of that Law.

Our Author suggests in Page 323, that if we assert that our Saviour hath revived an old, or exhibited a new Law, respecting Marriage, we shall adopt the Errors of Socinius and Mahomet, who affirmed that the Law of Moses was  
abrogated

abrogated by Christ and others, and that a new and more excellent Law than that of Moses is now prescribed to our Conduct.

As our Writer is particularly fond of deducing Consequences as Discouragements to the Adoption of Truths that militate against him, it may be necessary, previously to the Reply to the Suggestions before us, to declare that the Author of these Observations upon the Treatise on Female Ruin, is as sincere a Friend to the Protestant Religion, and as remote from Heterodoxy, as the Writer of that Treatise can possibly be: that the Author of these Observations hath as great a Regard for the Fair Sex, and ever was as much inclined to the conjugal Union as any the sincerest Votary of Hymen existing: that the Author of these Observations is at this Time, and many Years hath been, a married Man: and that though his Situation is such as might render him superior to ordinary Restraint, yet hath he ever adhered to, and observed the established Laws of Marriage, from Motives of Regard to the Injunctions of revealed Religion respecting it.

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With respect to our Author's Suggestions, that if we assert that Christ hath exhibited a new Law relating to Marriage, we must adopt the Errors of Socinus or Mahomet, who affirmed that the Law of Moses was abrogated, and that our Lord and others had introduced a new Law more excellent than the former; surely we may remark, that our Writer hath exonerated *himself* from all Imputation of that Insanity which he seems willing to indirectly ascribe not only to Infidels, but also to all sincere Christians who dissent from him. For, whereas he justly observes with Mr. Locke, that 'Madness is usually allowed to be so far consistent with itself, as to argue right from wrong Principles,' and hath most certainly properly applied this Observation to the impious Attempts of Socinus: yet hath our Author, in the Suggestions before us, not argued *right* from *wrong* Principles, but, consistently with *himself*, argued *wrong*, from *right* Principles. We contend not that the moral Law is abrogated, but that our Lord hath perfected it, and exhibited a new Command, prohibiting Polygamy; and how such an Assertion can entitle those who adopt it to the Denominations of Socinians, Mahomedans, or Mad-men,

men, must surely be a Problem that cannot easily be solved.

We are certainly obliged to observe the moral Precepts of the Mosaic Law, in all Instances where it corresponds with those of the Gospel, but must ingenuously confess that if, in any Instance, it differeth from that of the Gospel, or permits what the Gospel prohibits, we, as Christians, must give the Preference to the latter. The Mosaic Law, according to our Author, permits Polygamy; we are convinced that the Christian Law prohibits it: we are therefore indispensably obliged to obey the latter, though its Injunctions are contrary to such Mosaic Permission. As to our Author's Suggestions respecting the Immutability of the Law of Moses, and our Lord's Intention never to assume Authority to abrogate it, but only to fulfil all Righteousness, attest the Perfection of the Law, and illustrate and explain it—Our blessed Lord certainly came to divest the Law of the false Interpretations of the Jews, and to explain, perfect, and complete it; and therefore if there be any Improvement, or Alteration of that Law, or any Revival of an old Law, or any new Precept exhibited in the Gospel, all Christians, knowing



knowing them, are indispensably obliged to observe them.

The Plea of the Immutability, or Perpetuity of the Law of Moses, cannot excuse us if we are guilty of Polygamy under the Dispensation of the Gospel; the Mosaic Permission of Polygamy could not be intended to be perpetual, because Christ and his Apostles have abrogated it, and no Christian can pretend to indulge a Liberty that they have prohibited. The Lawfulness of unjust Divorce might as well be deduced from the Immutability and Perpetuity of the Law of Moses, as that of Polygamy. Our blessed Lord declared, that not one Tittle of the Law should fail, and that he came not to destroy, but fulfil it; yet he hath most expressly abrogated the Permission of Divorce in those Instances in which it was permitted by Moses.

Our Saviour certainly 'founded his Claim to the Character of the Messiah on the Old Testament, and never assumed Authority to abrogate the moral Law of Moses;' but yet he hath perfected and completed it, and enacted a Law contrary to the Permission of Divorce and Polygamy,

lygamy, without impeaching his own Veracity; or destroying the Mosaic System of Morals. Our Lord, certainly, might protest against all Intention to abolish the Mosaic Institutes, and yet, without any Impeachment of his Veracity, illustrate, perfect, and complete them; for, surely, Completion and Abolition are not synonymous Terms!

Our Saviour submitted to the Baptism of John, to fulfil all Righteousness, to own the Institutions, comply with the Precepts, and justify the Wisdom of God in sending John to prepare his Way, by calling Men to Repentance.

In the 11th of Saint Matthew, our Saviour saith of St. John, that he was more than a Prophet; that none had risen greater than John; and yet, that he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven, that the least Prophet under the Dispensation of the Gospel, is greater than he.— John is here represented as superior to all ancient Prophets, on account of his Knowledge of the Mysteries of the Gospel, his Testimony to Christ, and the Success of his Labours, as well as his having been foretold by ancient Prophecy, and his miraculous Birth; yet, saith our Lord, he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven, is greater



greater than he; the meanest Preachers of the Christian Religion shall, in general, receive greater Supplies of the Spirit, and the Knowledge of many important Truths of the Gospel, of which John was ignorant.

Our blessed Lord certainly came into the World to fulfil all Righteousness, to prescribe a complete Rule of Faith and Conduct, yet to do nothing of himself, but to preach the Doctrines of his Father, and teach as he gave him Commandment. John 12.—But can it be inferred from these Truths, that, as our Author suggests, our Lord could not intend, or have Power to prohibit Polygamy? No. The obvious Inferences from hence are, not that Christ by prohibiting Polygamy hath abrogated one Tittle of the Law, but only that he hath fulfilled, perfected and completed it; and that, as he taught as his Father gave him Commandment, his Prohibition of Polygamy, and all his Injunctions and Prohibitions, are agreeable to the divine Will.

The Law of Moses, notwithstanding our Author's Suggestions, most certainly never commanded Polygamy; the Mosaic Law respecting Seduction,

Seduction, by no Means expressly commanding Polygamy, nor indisputably extending to every Man; and our Saviour could not abrogate what never subsisted. Our Lord hath revived an old or advanced a new Law respecting Marriage, and abolished the Permission of Polygamy, but, by no means, hath destroyed any Law of Moses that commanded it; because no such Law ever subsisted,

Our Saviour certainly attested the Excellence of the Law when he declared, that there is no Commandment greater than those respecting our Love to God and Man.

The Commandment respecting our Love of God, is the principal and fundamental Command of the Law, and that to which all other are reducible and subordinate. The Law respecting the Love of our Neighbour is also like unto it. Every Duty to Man is reducible to, and will necessarily result from this Principle. The Law and the Prophets depend upon these Commandments, it being the Intention of all Revelation to promote them.

Grant



Grant we, therefore, these Truths also that our Lord, as before observed, hath divested the Law of the false Interpretations of the Jews; fully explained it, and declared that he came to fulfil it; let us even also indulge our Author with his Assertion that, when our Lord said he had given to his Disciples a *new* Commandment, that Commandment which is particularly stiled the Law of *Christ*, he meant only to establish, and more powerfully enforce, an *old* Commandment; yet what Advantage can possibly be derived from these Concessions, to our Author's Cause? Will these Concessions evince, that because our Lord came not to abolish the Mosaic moral Law, he could not fulfil, perfect, and complete it? Will they evince, that he could not forbid a Practice that Moses had never enjoined? Because they are inconsistent with an Intention to abrogate the Law, can they also be inconsistent with a Design to prohibit Polygamy, which the Law never commanded?

If our Author would effectually advance his Purpose, it should be recollected that it will be incumbent upon him to not only exhibit unquestionable Evidence against the Abrogation of the Mosaic Permission of Polygamy, but also to  
produce

produce an *express* Command of Polygamy from the Law of Moses. Previously to the Impeachment of our Lord's Veracity, who protested against the Abolition of the Law, diligent Search after the Command of Polygamy should be made amongst the Mosaic Institutes; and if our Author's Imagination should suggest to him, that the *desirable* Injunction hath not eluded his Inquiry, he will have the Satisfaction of conceiving that he is intitled to no trifling Acknowledgments from many *well-disposed* People, whose Minds have hitherto been filled with Matters of *strict* Restraint, by those of our Commentators who were incapable of such *deep*, and *beneficial* Investigation. Nor hath our Author Reason to apprehend, that the Result of such *laudable* Inquiries can prove, in the least, inconsistent with his Professions as a Freethinker in these Points, or as a *Friend* to the Law, and an Enemy to *vulgar* Prejudice, and Preconception. For the utmost Consequences of the Investigation of a Mosaic Injunction of Polygamy, can prove only that Moses commanded all Votaries of Hymen not merely to look with Desire after, but to freely have personal Intercourse with, and, at once, marry as many Women



Women as they pleased; and that all irregular Desire and Commerce between the Sexes, and Adultery and Seduction, instead of being censurable, were commendable and virtuous, under the Mosaic Dispensation. But, *amato ludo*, it must be ingenuously confessed, that such our Author's Researches would be intirely unnecessary; for could the Result of them prove an exprefs Command of Polygamy, yet, as before observed, we as Christians, must still be indispenfibly obliged to adhere to the Injunctions of the Gospel which exprefly forbid it.

But to proceed. Christ hath, certainly, reduced the Law of Marriage to its primitive Institution, and abrogated all Permission of Polygamy, and unjust Divorce. Christ, therefore, hath prohibited, what our Author asserts was before permitted or dispensed with; and yet acted consistently with his Declaration, that he came not to destroy, but to fulfil, advance and complete the Law: The Law of Moses was primarily addressed to, and intended for, the Jews; and our Saviour hath perfected, advanced and rendered it, by the *Accession* of the *Gospel*, a most complete Rule of Faith and Conduct to all Mankind.

To these Truths it is presumed our Author will readily subscribe, unless he would avow a Purpose to advance the Doctrines and Commands of the Old Testament to a Superiority over those of the New, or at least to an Equality with the Gospel as an universal Rule of Sentiment and Conduct, to which the Old Testament asserts no Claim.

Our Author asserts, that the Prohibition of Polygamy by our Lord, would prove an Impeachment of the divine Wisdom and Prescience, 'as arguing an Imbecility or Weakness of Understanding and Knowledge, like that of human Legislators, who make Laws to remedy Evils as they arise before them, but cannot tell what a Day may bring forth; and therefore repeal at one Time, the Law which they made at another.' Page 363.—This, it is confessed, is a pretty strong Assertion, and seems to border upon something worse than Insanity.

However, the Absurdity of this Suggestion is adequate to its Strength and Confidence. For nothing can be more evident, than that such a Prohibition of Polygamy is so remote from all  
Impeach-



Impeachment of the divine Wisdom and Providence, as to be entirely consonant with that Wisdom which hath ever been visible and admired in God's Regulation and Government of Mankind, and particularly in his revealing Doctrines and enacting Laws according to the Capacities and Situations of his Creatures, as they could bear them.

It becomes not finite Beings upon Earth to pretend to assign with Certainty the Reasons of divine Permissions; various Solutions have been attempted, that some have adopted, others rejected, as must be the Case where Revelation hath not afforded any express Declaration, or sufficient Light respecting them. But, though we have no express Declaration of Scripture concerning the Assertions before us, yet have we certain Facts evincing the Absurdity and Error of them.

Our Author in the Passages transcribed, and in those immediately preceding, hath confidently affirmed, that "It is as *impossible* that Christ  
" should condemn Polygamy as Adultery, as  
" that he should allow Adultery as lawful Com-  
" merce; and that to suppose God to ever re-

"voke, alter, or change the moral Institutes of  
 "the Old Testament, is to suppose some Defect  
 "in the Deity, and impeach his Wisdom and  
 "Prescience." Page 363.

Would not any Reader unacquainted with the  
 Scriptures, infer from such confident, not to say  
 impious Assertions of a Preacher of the Gospel,  
 that no Instance of the Alteration or Repeal of  
 any divine Institutions and Laws can possibly  
 be produced from the sacred Writings?

Our Author's asserting the Immutability of  
 the Law, and denying even Christ or the Deity  
 a Power to revoke, alter, or perfect his moral  
 Institutes, induce one to think, that this Writer  
 hath adopted certain metaphysical Positions,  
 which, by usurping the Place of Truth, often  
 prove the Source of pernicious Error. We must  
 suppose our Author to have so long dwelt upon  
 the eternal and unalterable Fitness and Unfitness  
 of Things, as to have conceived all Change of  
 them an Impossibility: when after all abstract  
 Reasonings and Harangues upon these Points,  
 nothing is more evident than that Things are  
 only fit, or unfit, as they relate to the Capaci-  
 ties, Situations, and Condition of Mankind;  
 and



and these Circumstances changed or altered, that which was before fit, becomes unfit, and that which before was innocent and virtuous, is now criminal and vicious.

I shall conclude what hath been offered, with one Instance, amongst others that might be adduced, that evince the Deity to have altered and even revoked, as well as permitted the Violation of his Institutions and Laws, according to the Capacities, Condition, and Situations of Mankind,—God expressly commanded our first Parents, and their immediate Successors, to increase and multiply, at a Time when their Situation was such that they could not obey this Law, without committing an Act which by a subsequent Law hath been prohibited as a Sin of the deepest Dye,

All personal Intercourse between Brother and Sister, is expressly forbidden by the Levitical Law; and nothing is more severely reprobated and condemned, in the New Testament, than the incestuous Commerce of the Sexes.

God's Command respecting Population by Persons nearly related, hath therefore been abrogated

gated by both the Old and New Testament, the Deity having, since their Promulgation, prohibited what before he permitted and enjoined. Nor can such Prohibition, in the least, impeach the Wisdom or Knowledge of the Deity, since the Circumstances and Situation of Mankind, at first, rendered such Permission indispensably necessary.—We therefore can safely affirm, that it is *not* impossible that the Deity should alter or revoke, or repeal at one Time the Law that he made at another.

THE END.